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Policy Title:       Complaints Resolution

Policy No:         1510

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Approval Body:   President's Office

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## Purpose

This policy provides the principles and framework to establish procedures to receive, investigate, and respond to complaints by students about instruction, services, or University policy.

## Scope

The policy applies to all members of the UCW community, in particular UCW students who are currently enrolled or were enrolled 30 days prior to initiating the Complaints Resolution process.

Issues related to situations addressed by other policies, such as academic and non-academic disciplinary decisions or sanctions imposed for violations of the Student Rights and Responsibilities policy, are addressed through other appeal or review processes (eg. academic appeals, appeals for non-academic discipline, admissions appeals, etc.). This policy does not cover these issues.

## Policy

University Canada West (UCW) strives to provide quality education and service experiences for students. Should a situation arise that prompts concerns for students, such concerns should be addressed appropriately, respectfully, and in a timely manner.

University Canada West (UCW) adheres to principles of administrative law and natural justice. All parties involved in reviewing and responding to complaints will listen and respond objectively and fairly.

UCW does not accept nor will it address anonymous submissions.

Complaints review procedures are developed to protect the rights of all concerned

## Procedures

Most complaints can be successfully resolved through informal processes such as discussions with the individuals or department involved. The intent of the Informal Complaint Resolution process is to facilitate the resolution of questions and concerns as expeditiously as possible. If the matter is not resolved through the Informal Resolution process, the student may proceed to the Formal Complaint Resolution process.

### Informal Complaints

Step 1 – Speak to the Instructor or Service Area Supervisor/Coordinator

- Students should first speak with the instructor (instructional complaints) or the service area supervisor/coordinator (service complaint) to resolve an issue.
- It is most effective to deal with situations immediately. Within ten (10) business days of the incident or event, the student should speak to the instructor or the service area supervisor/coordinator indicating:
  - The nature of the complaint
  - The requested remedy
- Within ten (10) business days of receiving the complaint, the instructor or service area supervisor/coordinator should provide their response to the student and send confirmation of the response in writing or by email.

Step 2 – Speak to the Department Chair (Program Head) or Service Area Manager

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of step 1, or if the student is not comfortable in proceeding with Step 1, within ten (10) business days the student should:

- Speak to the department chair (program head) or service area manager indicating:
  - The nature of the complaint
  - Efforts taken to address the complaint
  - Results of the resolution attempt
  - Requested remedy
- Within ten (10) business days of receiving the complaint the department chair (program head) or service area manager should provide their response to the student and send confirmation of the response in writing or by email.

## Formal Complaints

Step 3 – Written Complaint to the Department Chair (Program Head) or Service Area Manager

If the complaint has not been resolved through the informal complaint process, or if the student is not comfortable in proceeding with Step 1 or 2 of the informal process;

Within ten (10) business days of the original incident or the last communication of the informal complaint process, the student must:

- Provide a written summary of the complaint using the Student Complaint Resolution form to the Registrar's Office for review by the department chair (program head) or the service area manager. The written complaint must include:
  - Student name, student number, contact information, and program of study
  - A clear statement of the issue, problem, or incident
  - Date the issue occurred,
  - Reasons why the issue is being brought forward
  - Efforts taken to address the complaint
  - Results of the resolution attempt
  - A clear statement of the remedy being sought or suggestions for action.

Within ten (10) business days of receiving the written complaint the department chair (program head) or the service area manager will:

- Write to the student acknowledging receipt of the complaint
- Undertake an examination into the complaint
- Determine the appropriate resolution to the complaint
- Provide the student with a written response of their decision with regard to the complaint and provide a copy of the complaint and response to the Registrar's Office.

Step 4 – Written Request for Review to the Vice President Academic (instruction) or the Executive Director, Accreditation (services and policies).

If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the department chair (program head) or service area manager;

Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written response from Step 3 the student must submit a written request for review of the decision using the Student Complaint Resolution form to the Registrar's Office. The request for review will be considered by the VP Academic or the Executive Director, Accreditation. The submission must include:

- A copy of the original written complaint from Step 3
- All previous written responses, including email, from the informal resolution process (Steps 1 and 2)
- The written response from the department chair (program head) or service area manager (Step 3)
- All previous written responses from Steps 1 to 3, if applicable
- An explanation of the continued dissatisfaction

The Vice President or Executive Director will review the decision and provide the student with a written response, and send a copy to the Registrar’s Office, within twenty (20) business days of receipt of the request for review.

The decision of the Vice President or Executive Director is final.

If the complaint involves the Vice President, Academic or the Executive Director, Accreditation, the Registrar will designate an alternate senior administrator who is not involved in the complaint to investigate and provide a response to the student(s).

All documentation related to the student complaint and resolution process, including copies of the decisions, will be sent to the Registrar’s Office for retention. The Registrar’s Office shall track the timelines for responses to complaints.

## Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Word/Term	Definition
Complaint	A complaint is an expression of concern or dissatisfaction with an instructional situation, provision of a service, or the content of a policy.
Appeal	An official, written request for a formal review of a decision or sanction made under a University policy.

## Related legislation

None

## Related policies

Policy Number	Policy Title
5006	Academic Appeals
9011	Appeals for Non-Academic Discipline
9014	Student Rights & Responsibilities

## Responsibility

Students are responsible for addressing concerns in a timely and respectful manner, following the Complaints Resolution Policy. Students are expected to use the informal resolution process to initiate resolution of concerns.

Instructors, service area supervisors/coordinators, department chairs (program heads), service area managers, the Vice President Academic, and the Executive Director, Accreditation are responsible for addressing concerns raised by students in a timely, respectful manner; and knowing and following the Student Complaint Resolution policy.

All parties involved in hearing and responding to student complaints are responsible for keeping all records and correspondence related to complaint investigations and decisions in accordance with relevant university policies.

The Registrar’s Office maintains all records of Formal Complaints that are brought forward under the Complaints Resolution Policy and monitors adherence to timelines.

The Registrar’s Office will collect all relevant documents for record keeping and reporting purposes.